

# AUGUSTA HISTORICAL BULLETIN



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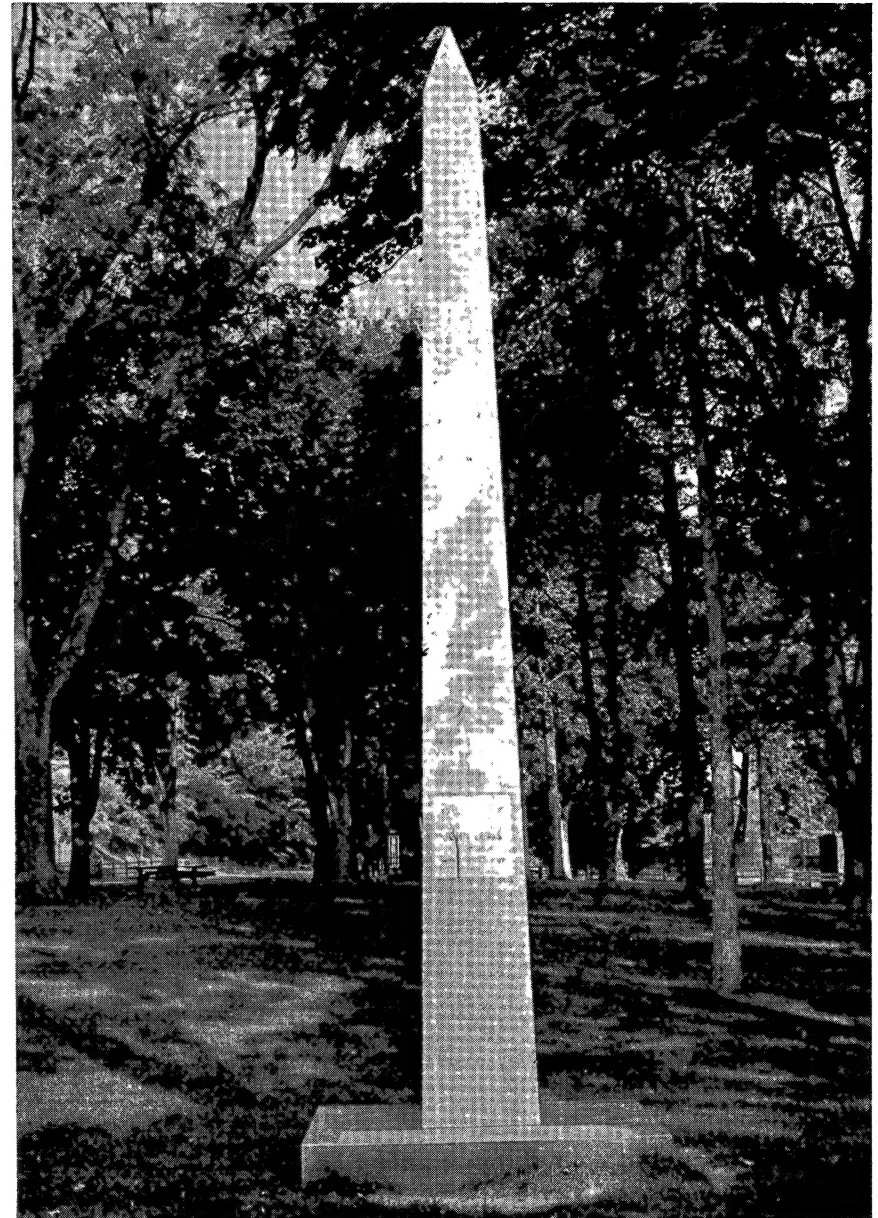
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Monument Honoring  
John Lewis  
Gypsy Hill Park  
Staunton, Virginia

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Richard P. Bell, M.D.

Staunton, Virginia

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A purpose of the Augusta County Historical Society is to publish *Augusta Historical Bulletin* to be sent without charge to all members. Single issues are available at \$1.00 per copy.

The membership of the society is composed of annual and life members who pay the following dues:

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## JOHN LEWIS, FOUNDER AND PATRIARCH

*Remarks made by Mr. Irvin Frazier of San Marino, California  
At Gypsy Hill Park, Staunton, Virginia, on May 30, 1962,  
in dedication of the monument to John Lewis.*

### MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It seems appropriate for us to gather here on this Memorial Day to dedicate this handsome monument to the memory of John Lewis. For me it is of course an honor and a privilege. It must be observed, however, that only a descendant of John Lewis would be so brash as to come here from California and try to discuss with you a part of your own history.

There are now 11 generations of John Lewis descendants in this country, numbering perhaps 3000 people — a goodly percentage of them appear to be present today. They live in almost every State of this Nation, and it is with this thought in mind that I have felt it proper for me to undertake to represent them and to review briefly with you the historical facts about John Lewis, so far as we know them.

We revere John Lewis as the Founder of Staunton, and as the Patriarch of a large and illustrious family. He was, of course, a pioneer settler of this Valley. In my judgment, however, what is of much greater importance is his contribution to the civic affairs of the colony. He helped in a very direct way to found this Nation, and I should like this afternoon to direct your attention to that facet of his life.

John Lewis was dedicated always to the cause of human liberty, and to the rights of the individual. Together with his wife, Margaret Lynn Lewis, he observed these principles in his day-to-day living. They provided in their home life such training for their immediate family that each of their sons, in turn, became leaders in our Revolution.

Two of these sons, Thomas and Andrew, were delegates in 1775 to the Revolutionary Convention of Virginia in Richmond, where Patrick Henry delivered his "liberty-or-death" speech. The resolutions for which he spoke were strongly opposed, but Thomas and Andrew Lewis voted for their adoption, and they

were approved. Andrew then served on a committee with George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, to "prepare a plan for putting the colony into a posture of defense." This certainly was among the earliest preparations for our Revolution.

The arrival of John Lewis in the upper Shenandoah Valley has been the subject of considerable discussion. I believe that historians generally are agreed that a handful of white settlers did in fact precede him into the area. It was he, however, who provided that nucleus of leadership required, which determined that this community should grow when and where it did.

John Lewis was born in Donegal County, Ireland, in 1678. We know only the year of his birth — not the month nor the day. The change in our calendar year, which took place in 1752, from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, may well have been the cause of our lack of information about his birthday. George Washington, then 20 years old, accepted this change which added 11 days to his actual birth date. Therefore we celebrate his birthday on February 22nd, instead of the 11th which is shown clearly in the family Bible at Mount Vernon. John Lewis, however, was 74 years old at the time of this change. It is easy to believe that he never accepted the change in his birthday, and that his heirs chose therefore to record on his tombstone only the year of his birth.

We do know that in Ireland he was a member of the Gentry, those ranking between the Nobility and the Yeomanry. In the earliest court records of this County he is referred to, almost invariably, as John Lewis, Gentleman.

In 1715 he married Margaret, the daughter of William Lynn and his wife Margaret Patton Lynn. Margaret Lynn Lewis inherited from her mother the Estate "Ruskie" in the Parish of Drumachoose, County Derry, Ireland.

This monument and the stone over his grave both record his "slaying of the Irish Lord." This tragic incident led directly to his emigration to this country, and hence it seems fitting to discuss it here.

The handsome estate which came to Lewis by inheritance was increased by his industry and frugality, until he became the lessee of an adjoining property. The owner of this other estate was the Irish Lord of Clonmithgarin, an upstanding individual with whom Lewis never had any trouble. Upon his death in 1728, however, the Lord's profligate son, Sir Mingo Campbell,

became the new owner of the estate. He desired to revoke the Lewis lease. While John Lewis was absent from home, he and his cronies attempted to take forcible possession of the premises.

In the fight which followed, Lewis' younger brother Samuel fell mortally wounded, just as John Lewis returned to his home. John's wife Margaret had been severely wounded. John Lewis took up the fight in defense of his home and family, and promptly killed the young Lord.

This action was in self-defense, and by all legal precepts was fully justifiable. In fact it was so determined, at a later period, and a pardon was granted to Lewis. At that time, however, Lewis knew that, because of the high standing of the young Lord and his own lack of proper evidence, it was desirable for him to flee the country. Accordingly, he took shelter in Londonderry, and when a ship was ready to sail for America, he embarked upon it. Landing in Philadelphia, he proceeded directly to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Thus this man, nurtured in high civilization, was by a quirk of fate suddenly deprived of his position, and banished from his native land. Far from railing at this unfavorable turn of events for him, Lewis faced up directly to all of his adversity, and proved more than a match for it. He made it a foundation stone upon which to build an incomparably better future for his family and for this Nation.

Lewis lived in America for three years before his family joined him, in 1731. Then, in the summer of 1732, he and his family, with an undetermined number of associates, trudged on foot southward up the Shenandoah River Valley. They traveled along an old buffalo trail—yes, there were buffalo here in those days. This trail had been enlarged by Indian use, so that it provided a fair entry into the wilderness. Lewis has been described as being tall and muscular, the best backwoodsman of his day, and he proved to be a natural leader for the group.

Lewis first located on the left bank of Middle River, which then was called Carthrae's River. From this point he removed to Lewis Creek, one mile east of here, where he built the stone house then known as Fort Lewis. Until very recently this stone building was standing, but now it has been removed. The log building which he erected later, adjoining it, still stands. It has been remodeled and is occupied today as a home.

This Valley was a part of Spotsylvania County at the time

of Lewis' arrival. Two years later it became a part of Orange County. For the first few years of Lewis' residence here, all the history we have has come to us through the court and church records, plus a few family legends. John Lewis and his fellow settlers were too busy *making* history to bother with seeing that it was properly recorded.

In the Orange County records, the first allusion to the Valley appears in July, 1736. Reference was made to "inhabitants on the western side of Shenando". In the eyes of the law, these were at that time squatters on the public domain.

Complications with regard to the land arose some four years after Lewis' arrival. On September 6, 1736, William Gooch, Commander in Chief of the Colony of Virginia, granted to William Beverley et al a total of 118,491 acres, which included the property settled by Lewis. Lewis, in an obvious move to acquire proper legal title to his home, obtained by deed from Beverley, on February 21, 1738, a patent on 2,071 acres in the Beverley Grant.

In November of 1738 the Counties of Augusta and Frederick were established by the General Assembly of the Colony of Virginia. Augusta, the larger of these two counties, extended to the southern border of Virginia. On the west it embraced the whole territory claimed by Great Britain. This included nearly all of West Virginia and the States of Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and part of Pennsylvania.

John Lewis was sworn in to his military commission in 1739. The record does not state his rank, but doubtless it was Colonel, since thereafter he was referred to on many occasions as Colonel Lewis.

The first regular sermon ever delivered in this area was preached at the home of John Lewis, in November, 1738, by Rev. James Anderson. Lewis became active in securing the services of a regularly settled minister in the region, with the result that in 1740 Rev. John Craig became their first minister.

John Lewis and his wife set the moral tone for the Augusta community. By word and deed, he and his associates so moulded the character of the people between 1732 and 1745 that, without the aid of civil or military establishments, they maintained law and order in the colony. They cultivated in all a respect for the rights of others. It is of particular significance that for nearly 15 years after Lewis' arrival there was not even a jail in the community.

In 1741 John Lewis was appointed Justice of the Court, and in 1745 he became one of the first Justices of the Augusta County Court when it was formed. He continued in that capacity until his death.

Lewis was greatly concerned, from the very beginning, with the need of the community for good roads, especially for roads leading to the east. Reversing the usual order of construction, these roads were built from west to east, and the Augusta colony became noted for its prosperity. Physically and socially it was indeed far in advance of other frontier settlements.

The early records reveal that the name of Staunton first appears in 1748. Until that time it apparently had been known as Beverley's Mill Place. Staunton was the maiden name of Lady Gooch, the wife of Governor Gooch, and this community was so named in her honor.

Surveying of the townsite was done by John Lewis' son Thomas, who in 1745 had qualified as County Surveyor. In 1761 the town of Staunton was chartered by Act of the Assembly, and one of its first Trustees was William Lewis, another of John Lewis' sons.

John Lewis' true influence upon the fortunes of this community and this Nation is found, in fact, in the record of his sons. Let us, therefore, look briefly at their record.

There is some disagreement among historians as to the number of his sons, some reporting four instead of the five which are indicated by this monument and his gravestone. Samuel, the oldest son, was omitted, and it seems likely that this may be due to the fact that he died unmarried and before the widely publicized events of the Revolution. We are told that he served with distinction as a Captain in the War between the English and French Colonists, and that he was present at Braddock's defeat in 1755. In that same engagement his brothers William and Charles were wounded, and I believe that Historian Van Meter is correct in stating that Samuel Lewis was killed in that battle.

Thomas Lewis, the next oldest son, represented Augusta County in the House of Burgesses at Williamsburg almost continuously from 1745 to 1767. In 1765, 11 years *before* the Declaration of Independence, he voted in favor of Patrick Henry's celebrated resolutions against the Stamp Act. By a margin of

one vote, these resolutions were passed. Here certainly was a landmark in American history.

It was here that Patrick Henry, then a young unknown, made the speech that was to make him famous, saying "If this be treason, make the most of it." His resolutions declared that "this general assembly have the only exclusive right and power to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this colony; that any efforts in an opposite direction are illegal, unconstitutional and unjust, and have a manifest tendency to destroy British as well as American freedom." Shortly thereafter the Stamp Act was repealed, but as Woodrow Wilson observed, Patrick Henry's words were "the first words of a revolution, and no man ever thought just the same again after he had read them."

Thomas Lewis was a member of all the Virginia revolutionary conventions, beginning with the first at Williamsburg, on August 1, 1774. This convention sent delegates to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia in September, 1774. Later, he was a member of the Legislature, and subsequently he was a member of the convention that sat in Richmond in 1788 and ratified the Constitution of the United States.

Augusta County was the banner county at the convention which met at Williamsburg on May 6, 1776. The Journal of the convention records that the committee from the County of Augusta were the *first* in recommending independence in the convention. This representation was delivered to the convention by Thomas Lewis, and historians record that it probably was from his pen. It emphasized the need for an "independent and lasting" government. The convention, on May 15, 1776, instructed its representatives in the Continental Congress to propose immediate independence.

Andrew Lewis, the next son, is best known for his victory over the combined Indian tribes at Point Pleasant, on October 10, 1774. Here indeed was another landmark in American history. Theodore Roosevelt said: "Its results were most important. It kept the northwestern tribes quiet for the first three years of the Revolutionary struggle; and above all it rendered possible the settlement of Kentucky, and therefore the winning of the West." When the independence of the United States was being recognized, at the Paris Convention of 1783, the American representatives were able to show that, not only had they conquered the vast Illinois region, but that Virginia had established civil government there. So then the Mississippi River, and not the

Alleghenies, became the western boundary of the United States.

Andrew Lewis represented the County of Botetourt at the second revolutionary convention of Virginia, in March, 1775. He previously had served as Justice of the Botetourt Court, and had represented that County in the House of Burgesses. In 1768 he was one of the commissioners representing Virginia in concluding a treaty with the Six Nations at Fort Stainwix, in New York. He became a Brigadier-General in the Colonial Army. His figure appears on the equestrian statue of George Washington in Richmond. Washington himself, according to his memoirs, expressed the wish, when appointed Commander-in-Chief, that that appointment had been given to Andrew Lewis.

Colonel William Lewis has been mentioned already as one of the first Trustees of the town of Staunton. He graduated from a medical school in Philadelphia, and practiced medicine in Staunton. It is of special interest to us here today that he is the direct ancestor of our Chairman, Dr. Dick Bell, and that in this particular family line he was only the first of at least seventeen prominent men of medicine.

William Lewis volunteered for service in the War between the English and French Colonists, and was severely wounded in 1755 at Braddock's defeat. In 1776 he accepted a commission as Colonel in the old Continental Line. He was taken prisoner at Charleston in 1780, and was released in 1781. In recognition of his many acts of charity and his great interest in all civic affairs, he became known as the Civilizer of the Border.

Colonel Charles Lewis, the youngest of John Lewis' sons, was killed at the Battle of Point Pleasant. Historians have considered him the most skilful of all the leaders of the Indian wars, and have pointed out that he was one of the few white men ever to escape from the Indians after having been captured and shackled. He served as a member of the House of Burgesses, and it is evident that a brilliant career was cut short when he died in battle. The County of Lewis, now in West Virginia, was named as a memorial to him, by the Legislature of Virginia.

So we see that the sons of John Lewis, without a single exception, reflected considerable credit upon the early training received from him. In each case the strength of their character is evidence of the ideas prevailing in his home.

We should not, however, delude ourselves that John Lewis was entirely faultless. Enough of his foibles have been reported



to us to show that he was human, and we would not have it otherwise. Repeatedly, according to the court records, he resorted to legal action to settle his arguments. And it also is obvious that at times he procrastinated, even as you and I. On one occasion he obtained a permit to erect a mill at his home place, then after a lapse of several years he used that permit in court to prevent the issuance of a similar one to a newcomer, because he himself still intended to construct his mill. The records don't reveal whether he ever actually got his mill built.

John Lewis contracted to build a chapel for the community, and the church records show that after nine years it still had not been built. This, however, was not a case of neglect — He had a continuing feud for that length of time with Colonel James Patton, regarding where the chapel was to be located. This feud ended only when Colonel Patton was killed by the Indians.

John Lewis died here on February 1, 1762, 30 years after his arrival in Augusta County. These 30 years he devoted to advancing the interests of this community, and the results speak for themselves. So, as we dedicate this monument to his memory, we pray that it may serve to remind future generations of the profound influence he exerted in shaping the course of this Nation. The monument itself carries a proper summary of his life: "He was a brave man, a true patriot, and a firm friend of liberty throughout the world."

## A PRICELESS HERITAGE

A brief summary of the colonial history of the colors carried by the 116th Infantry Regiment, Virginia National Guard, at the dedication ceremony of the John Lewis monument in Gypsy Hill Park, Staunton, Virginia. Given by General Archibald A. Sproul, Commander of the 29th Division.

"The colors are here today," General Sproul told the large audience, "because the unit they represent had its birth in 1742. It was constituted by Sir William Gooch, lieutenant governor and commander-in-chief of the colony of Virginia, as the Augusta County Regiment Militia at Beverley's Mill Place, later the Augusta County Court House and now Staunton. It consisted then of 12 rifle companies of 50 men, commanded by Colonel James Patton.

One of the 12 company commanders of the original units was Andrew Lewis, a son of John Lewis in whose honour this ceremony is being held. These were the first troops raised for the defense of Augusta County, which had been organized from Orange County in 1738. The county was bounded on the east by the Blue Ridge and on the west by the Mississippi, consisting of all the present states of Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois and western Pennsylvania.

This regiment comprised the sole military force in this vast western frontier and wilderness. The men furnished their own arms and equipment, which consisted of a long rifle, shot bag, powder horn, knife and tomahawk. Their clothing was comprised of homespun hunting shirts and moccasins.

The Augusta regiment was in continuous service from the date of its organization in 1742 until December of 1792, at which time it was formed into the 32nd and 93rd regiments of the Virginia Militia.

Andrew Lewis was the commander of Company No. 2. Other companies were commanded by John Buchanan, John Christian, John Wilson, George Robertson, and John McDowell. This regiment proudly carries the following battle streamers for this period —

First Indian War, 1742 - 1744

Second Indian War, 1753 - 1755

French and Indian War, 1755 - 1763

Third Indian War, 1763 - 1764

Colonel James Patton was killed by the Indians on July 30, 1755. As soon as Governor Dinwiddie heard of his death he ordered Captain Andrew Lewis to take command of the Augusta County Regiment. Captain Lewis qualified as county lieutenant and colonel in the Augusta Court at its August term in 1755. They continued fighting under Colonel Lewis during the remainder of the French and Indian Wars, bringing great honour to their unit and their county.

During the Third Indian War, Colonel Lewis consolidated four of his companies into two of 100 men each, under the commands of Captain John Lewis, his brother, and Captain McClanahan. They departed for Fort Pitt in October, 1764.

Owing to the continuous raids of the Shawnee and Delaware Indians, the Earl of Dunmore, lieutenant and Governor General of the Colony of Virginia, received authority from the House of Burgesses to take necessary steps to repel the attacks.

On July 24, 1774, the Governor issued an order to General Andrew Lewis, former county lieutenant and colonel of the Augusta County Regiment, but at this time county lieutenant of Botetourt County, the adjoining county on the south, to raise a force of troops and proceed to the fork of the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers. The Governor would join him with a similar force, coming down the Ohio River from Fort Pitt.

General Lewis' force came from the counties of Botetourt, Augusta, Dunmore, Culpeper, Bedford and Kentucky. They were known as the Southern Division, or left wing of the Army and numbered 1,500 men of which 600 were furnished by Augusta County.

This constituted the Augusta County Regiment and was commanded by Colonel Charles Lewis. (Andrew's younger brother.) He took with him 400 pack horses laden with 54,000 pounds of flour and other provisions.

General Lewis' division was in camp by October 9, and was attacked on October 19, 1774. The Augusta Regiment lost heavily in the battle and Colonel Charles Lewis was killed. Sampson Matthews succeeded to the command and commanded it throughout the Revolutionary War.

The present regiment has carried on for over 200 years. Its history is that of our country, having taken part in every war since the founding of our great nation. It has earned 38 battle streamers. It was part of that great Stonewall Brigade. It fought in World War I and World War II. And it was there in the

dawn of D-Day, June 6th, 1944, on the bloody sands of the Normandy beaches that one of the most glorious pages of its two century old history was written."

## ALEXANDER HUMPHREYS, M. D. 1757-1802

(Address delivered before the Augusta County Medical Association on the occasion of the dedication of a bronze tablet at the grave of Dr. Humphreys in Trinity Churchyard, Staunton, Virginia, April 15, 1951.)

*Richard P. Bell, M. D.  
Staunton, Virginia*

Today is an important one in the medical history of this city and county. The dedication this afternoon of the new King's Daughters' Hospital will, we believe, usher in for us a new era in medical practice; and on this day, when we are looking forward with so much hope and so much confidence, our Medical Society chooses also to look backward over a long period of time to the years between 1757 and 1802. This was the short life span of the man in whose honor we are here gathered. Who was this Dr. Alexander Humphreys and what did he do to warrant this long retrospect?

Alexander Humphreys was born in County Armagh, Ulster Province, in the north of Ireland, in 1757, being one of a family of ten children. His people were prosperous, well-educated members of the so-called Scotch-Irish race. That term, I claim, is a misnomer. These people were pure Scotch, transplanted to the north of Ireland by the forces of economic, political and religious adversity; and though living in Ireland, pure Scotch they remained. They neither intermarried nor intermingled with the native Irish; and now, after four hundred years, those who remain in Ireland of that Scotch-Irish race are still pure Scotch.

Of Alexander Humphreys' boyhood, we know little, except that he received the best schooling available. His people were highly religious and of strictest Covenanter type. His mother's brother, Dr. Carlisle, was a well-known medical practitioner

nearby; and young Alexander, having decided in his early youth on medicine as a profession, in due time became the pupil of his uncle. Those were the days of Preceptorships, when medical students read medicine and secured practical instruction in the homes and offices of successful practitioners. This tutelage continued from two to four years; and after this time some students entered directly into private, independent practice. Others transferred to medical schools, which were few in number, and there finished their education under eminent professors, many of them receiving finally the M. D. degree, but a considerable number entering practice with no degree. Alexander Humphreys, after absorbing all the medical lore Dr. Carlisle could impart, betook himself across the narrow waters and enrolled at the University of Edinburgh, then the most famous medical school in the world. After three years he graduated with the degree of Doctor of Medicine. By this time he had attained the age of twenty-five. The lure of America which was affecting so many of his countrymen began to draw him and he decided at about the termination of the Revolutionary War to emigrate to Virginia. The Scotch in Ireland were no lovers of England, and Humphreys doubtless heartily sympathized with the American Colonies and rejoiced in their triumph over the mother country. In fact, he had an older brother in Virginia who had lived in Augusta County near Greenville since 1764, and who had fought in the American Army. This brother, David Carlisle Humphreys, had become an influential citizen of the county; he had married a distant cousin, Miss Finley, and they had raised a large family of boys and girls who had intermarried with leading families in the county. Many descendants of David Carlisle Humphreys still live in this area.

And so young Alexander, with his new medical degree and much enthusiasm, emigrated to the New World, came directly to Augusta County and settled near his brother's home. He lived and practiced in the county between the years 1783 and 1787. The latter year found him in Staunton, lured hither by the greater opportunities offered by residence in the county seat and largest town west of the Blue Ridge.

And what sort of place did he find himself in when he moved here? A frontier town of about eight hundred people, one-fourth of them colored slaves; one church, the parish church of the county. The block surrounding this church had been presented in 1750 to the county by William Beverley. The

cemetery was the community burying ground and was so used by all denominations and races until 1850 when it could hold no more graves. There were from fifteen to eighteen stores in the town, and seven inns. Staunton was at the crossing of two important highways and in those days of great migration to the west and south, many travellers stopped here. There was a courthouse, a primitive prison, a whipping post and a ducking stool, the latter never having been used because there was insufficient water in Lewis Creek to operate it. There were three doctors in the town besides Dr. Humphreys: William Groves, Hugh Richie and Alexander Long. Of them we know little. Richie was a Frenchman who had come over with the French troops who fought in the Revolution. There were no four-wheeled vehicles in Staunton, and only two gigs, or two-wheelers. Neither of these was owned by a doctor, so we conclude that these four were doctors on foot, sometimes on horseback. We have interesting but unflattering descriptions of the Staunton of that period written by two foreigners, an Englishman named Isaac Wald, and a Frenchman by the name of Rochefoucauld. From their accounts we learn that there were about two hundred houses in the town, mainly built of stone; that military titles and uniforms were very numerous; that gambling and betting were prevalent; that the food markets held twice weekly were exceedingly poor and that the horse races were miserable. Also, that the manners of the people were about like those of Richmond, whatever that may have implied. There was no post-office until 1793. The town was governed until 1802 by Trustees elected by the freeholders.

Into such a town moved Dr. Alexander Humphreys in 1787, four years after peace had been concluded with England. He was then thirty years of age. The following year he married Mary, the fourth child of the Reverend John Brown of New Providence Church, the first Presbyterian minister of Rockbridge County, and a man of outstanding character, education and intellect. Dr. Brown had a marked effect for good in his community. Beside his great work in his Church, he established and taught the first school in this part of the Valley of Virginia. Four sons and two daughters were born to Alexander and Mary Humphreys.

Searching for information about Dr. Alexander Humphreys, we find references to him in court records, deed books, various medical histories of his time, in government archives, in private

letters and other sources. Pieced together, these records and references, all too few, seem to present the picture of a man whose short life had three different aspects:—his life as a citizen in a growing pioneer town; his life as a busy doctor; and his life as a teacher of medical students.

As a citizen of his new home, he soon came into prominence. We find him in 1790 helping to organize a Fire Company. Along with about forty of the leading business and professional men of the town, he became a member of that highly important organization. We next find him appointed by the court to a committee of five prominent citizens to report on plans for a new jail. We have records of his buying and selling numerous pieces of real estate in the town and in this and adjoining counties. We note his appointment, in 1791, as Gentleman Justice of the Peace. In 1792, with twelve other leading men, he was appointed by the Legislature as Trustee of the Staunton Academy, the first school established in the town. He was elected first president of its Board, and the following year we read of his serving on a committee of three Trustees to examine an applicant for the chair of Latin and Greek in the new school. During Dr. Humphreys' life-time this academy was housed in rented rooms; but the year of his death saw the construction of a large brick schoolhouse on the northeast corner of New and Academy streets, which stood until about forty years ago. Dr. Humphreys served on a court of Gentlemen Justices, acting as a grand jury which indicted John Bullitt for horse-stealing, for which capital crime this unfortunate man was hung at the place of execution located by the court at the intersection of New and Augusta streets in the then northern limits of the town. From this fact that part of Staunton was for many years known as Gallows Town.

As a practitioner of medicine, Dr. Humphreys appears to have soon become exceedingly busy and increasingly well-known throughout the town, the county and adjoining counties. His name appears in numerous court records attesting wills of prominent citizens, certifying the fitness of midwives to perform their duties, examining Revolutionary War pensioners. Some of these latter records show his intimate knowledge of anatomy. In 1793 he found it necessary to employ an apothecary to assist him with his work. Accordingly, he wrote to Edinburgh and secured the services of one George C. McIntosh, making a contract with him for a period of four years. McIntosh after one

year defaulted on the agreement and entered practice independently, advertising his services to the public, claiming to have graduated at Edinburgh and to have studied under the great Dr. Monroe. Humphreys sued him for breach of contract, but the suit was dismissed at the cost of the defendant. In 1788, soon after his arrival in Staunton, Humphreys petitioned the court for permission to erect an "elaboratory" on the prison lot. Permission was granted and he accordingly built a workshop at about the site of the present jail. Here he compounded drugs and carried on dissection for his own benefit and for that of his students. His own office and rooms for instructing students were also located in this building. His fame spread, he was sent for by doctors at a distance in consultation over difficult cases. One of these consultations we know was historic. Dr. Jesse Bennett, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, had settled in Rockingham County at the village of Edom. On January 14, 1794, his own wife was in labor with her first child. The labor was prolonged and unproductive, and Dr. Bennett, becoming alarmed, dispatched a messenger for Dr. Humphreys. On his arrival, the two endeavored in every way to bring about a successful delivery, attempting to apply forceps several times. The pelvis was found to be contracted and normal delivery impossible. Two procedures were then discussed: first, craniotomy, with destruction of the child; second, Cesarean section, an operation never performed on a living woman up to that time. Dr. Humphreys advised against the Cesarean operation and advocated craniotomy. Mrs. Bennett, the patient, then spoke up and begged for the Cesarean section, saying that she felt sure she would die under either procedure and wanting the life of the child saved. Dr. Bennett then requested Dr. Humphreys to operate, but he most positively declined to do so. Bennett then decided to attempt the job himself and accordingly, on a table of two planks resting on barrels, with two Negro women holding the patient and a huge dose of laudanum the only anesthetic, this heroic man proceeded to perform the first Caesarean section in history on a living woman, and, remarkable to relate, both mother and child survived and lived, both of them to old age. Dr. Bennett has not been accorded the place in history which he deserves, because he failed to report the case in medical literature. When asked by his colleagues why he failed so to report it, he replied that there were two reasons—First, no decent man would report such an operation on his own wife;



and, second, his medical friends already knew of the operation and that doctors who didn't know him would never believe him if he reported it, and he was not going to give them the opportunity to call him a liar. This operation has since been duly authenticated and recorded by other doctors. It antedated Ephraim McDowell's ovariectomy by fifteen years. Incidentally, double ovariectomy was done by Dr. Bennett as part of the operation.

But it is as a teacher that the name of Alexander Humphreys has persisted for one hundred and fifty years in medical history; and it is mainly for his achievements as a teacher of medicine that we honor him here at his grave today. He attracted students from near and far. How many young men studied under him as preceptor, we do not know. Immediately after his death in 1802 his whole family moved to Kentucky and his records were either destroyed or taken along by the family. It is inconceivable that a man of his ability kept no records of any sort. Let us hope that there are records and that one of his six children preserved them and that they may some day come to light.

Out of the group of young doctors that Dr. Humphreys trained, there are five of whom we know who attained eminence of one sort or another. William Wardlaw, one of his first students, studied here more than two years, then emigrated to Tennessee and became famous in the early medical history of that state. William Wardlaw and another student, James McPheeters, unwillingly brought trouble upon their preceptor. The remains of a human body which they had caused to be exhumed and had used for dissection, were sewed up by them in a crocus sack and deposited in a cave on Sear's Hill. The sack had the name of Dr. Humphreys on it; and after being found and inspected, a grand jury investigation was held. A traveller had disappeared from one of the town taverns and murder was suspected. The grand jury, on hearing the testimony of the students, acquitted Dr. Humphreys; but rumors spread to other towns and he had much worry and unhappiness and several lawsuits in connection with the case.

Another student was Andrew Kean of Goochland County. He afterwards made a name for himself as a physician in his home county. He was chief surgeon of the Eighth Regiment of Virginia Militia in the War of 1812. He became more and more eminent after this war and was offered a chair in the

medical school of Thomas Jefferson's new University of Virginia. He declined the offer and continued in private practice.

William Henry Harrison, ninth President of the United States, in his youth started to study medicine under Dr. Andrew Leiper of Richmond. He then came to Staunton and continued his studies under Dr. Humphreys. Then he entered the University of Pennsylvania and was there when his father, Benjamin Harrison, of Charles City County, died. William Henry Harrison then gave up medicine and entered the Army, rising to the grade of General. He defeated the Indians at the famous battle of Tippecanoe Creek and soon thereafter was elected President, defeating Martin Van Buren. He died one month after his inauguration and was succeeded by Tyler, his vice-president and a fellow Virginian.

Samuel Brown, younger brother of Dr. Humphreys' wife, was also a medical pupil of his brother-in-law. He studied in Staunton three years and then entered the University of Edinburgh, where he remained two years. He did not graduate, but returned to America in 1795. He tried out several locations, near Washington, in New Orleans, in Alabama, and, finally, he settled in Lexington, Kentucky. He was pioneer vaccinator of America. Four years after Jenner's famous discovery, Samuel Brown had vaccinated successfully more than five hundred persons in Kentucky. Vaccination was still being only tentatively used at that time in the large cities of the East. Brown became professor of medicine in Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, the first medical school west of the Alleghanies. He was also a scientist and contributed to scientific magazines. He wrote the first medical paper published by a Kentucky doctor. He also had the distinction of introducing lithography into America.

Last, and most famous of Dr. Humphreys' pupils, was Ephraim McDowell. Born in Rockbridge County just south of Fairfield, he moved to Kentucky with his family at the age of twelve. His father became one of the first judges in the new state. At the age of nineteen, Ephraim returned to Virginia and enrolled under Dr. Humphreys. After three years here, his teacher persuaded him to finish his education in Edinburgh. He remained there two years but did not graduate. He was mainly interested in surgery and was greatly moved and influenced by the famous Edinburgh surgeon and anatomist, John Bell. Returning to America in the late summer of 1794, he remained in Staunton

until January, 1795, when he returned to his home in Danville, Kentucky. There he accomplished his amazing and revolutionary work in surgery, acquiring the title of Father of Ovariectomy and Founder of Abdominal Surgery. His work is too well known and reported to be further commented on here.

How are we to appraise and evaluate the worth of this man, Alexander Humphreys, one hundred and forty-nine years after his passing?

I submit that he was a doctor and a teacher far ahead of his times, and that he carried the torch of medical learning with honor to himself and benefit to humanity. It is pleasant to think that he may know of this gathering here today to do him honor; but whether he does or he doesn't, I would say to him:—"Dr. Humphreys, your successors in medicine after many years salute you; and it is our prayer that your great energy, your keen intellect and your abounding zeal to learn and to teach may so inspire us that we may become better and more useful practitioners of the art of healing."

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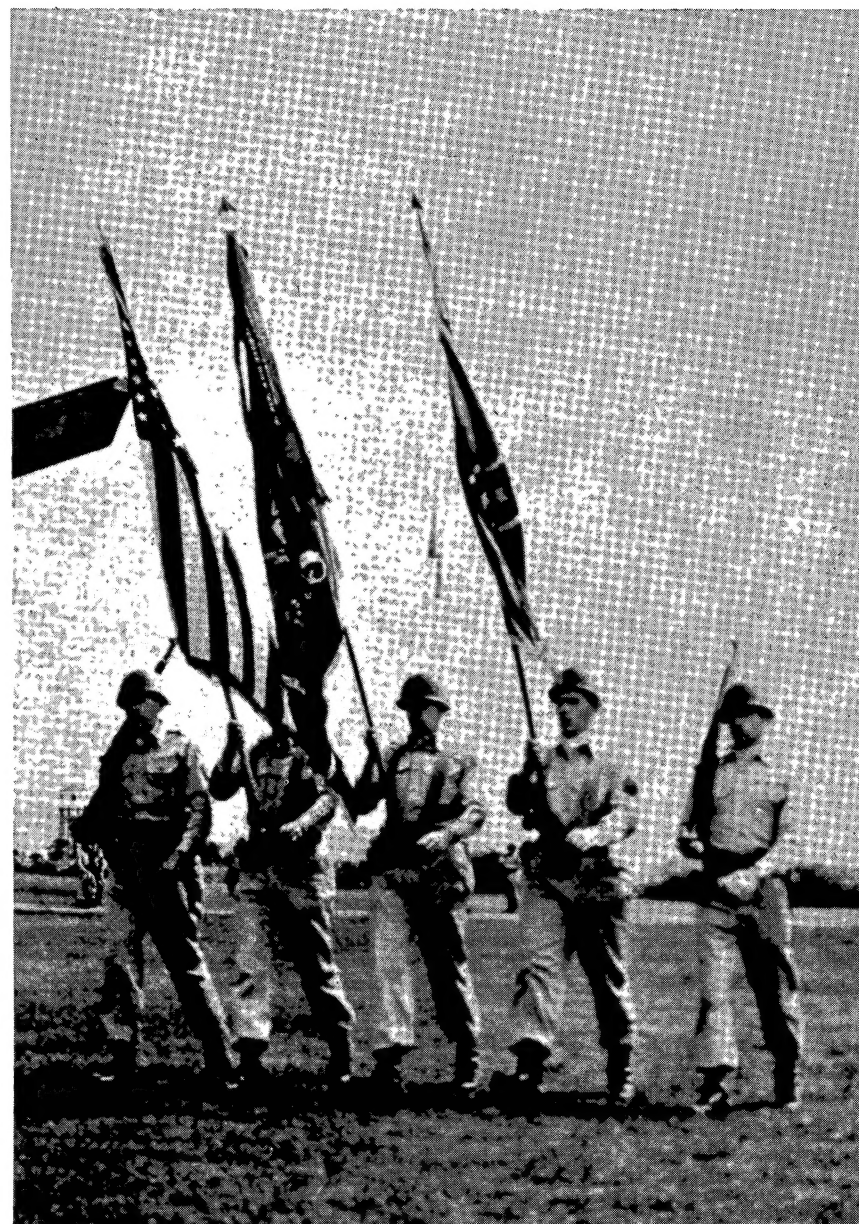
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